

A. REMARKS

1. Drawings

Applicant submits substitute drawing sheet for FIG. 1 and FIG. 2 with printed callout number 100 in place of the written callout number. No new matter has been

2. Claim objections

Claims 23, 24 and 27 have been amended to remove the examiner's objections.

3. Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 112

The examiner rejected claims 12 and 16-30 for indefiniteness. Claims 12, 16 and 27 have been amended to remove the basis for the objections in claims 12 and 16-30.

4. Claim Rejections – 35 USC §102

The examiner rejected Claims 1-11, 14-28, 30 and 31 as being anticipated by Sullivan (U.S. Patent 374,715). Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 16, 27 and 31 to include the limitation that each cover engages a group of threads affixing one of the plurality of shirt buttons to the shirt and that each cover encloses at least one side and a circumferential edge of each of the buttons. Support for the amendment is found on page 7, lines 11-19, on page 8, lines 11-12 of the specification and in FIG. 1-4. Sullivan cannot enclose both a side and the circumferential edge of a button because Sullivan does not have a rim for this purpose.

In a telephone interview on September 8, 2004, the examiner cited a new reference, United States Patent 6,502,284, which disclosed a pair of containers, connected by a chain, and each container having a hinged half-lid. The half-lids closed about and

held a napkin so that the napkin could be hung around a user's neck by the chain. The '284 patent cannot engage a group of threads that affix a button to a shirt since the containers cannot engage threads extending between a button and a shirt.

For the foregoing reasons, applicant submits that the claims as amended distinguish over Sullivan.

4. Allowable Subject Matter

The examiner stated that the subject matter of claims 12 or 13 would be allowable if incorporated with the limitations of the independent claim or any intervening claim. Applicant has not amended claims 12 or 13 because the independent claims have been amended to distinguish over Sullivan as set forth above.

For the foregoing reasons, the Applicant submits that the claims of the present application are not fairly taught by any of the references of record, taken either alone or in combination. Therefore, allowance of the present application is in order, and is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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On 9/20/2004
Date

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